

(b) whether these unrealistic specifications are being imposed on us by the Developed countries to prevent imports into their country; and

(c) if so, the details of action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMARABDULLAH): (a) to (c) There are no specific product-quality related restrictions on exports of leather goods from India. However from time to time some of the countries have been requiring suppliers including Indian exporters to meet certain consumer/environment security standards which the Indian industry has been able to comply with. In this regard Government organisations like Central Leather Research Institute and Footwear Design and Development Institute are assisting the industry by extending appropriate technical support.

Free Import of Silk Fabrics

2586. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that prominent silk exporters throughout the country have urged Government to allow free import of silk fabrics to improve the quality of silk made garments and curb rampant smuggling of silk fabrics into the country;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto and whether it is proposed to concede this demand; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMARABDULLAH): (a) to (c) Some silk exporters of the country have represented to the Government regarding removal of import restrictions on silk fabrics. Silk fabrics are classified under Chapter 50 of ITC(HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items, 1997—2002. Import restrictions on these items are likely to be removed by 31.03.2001.

Export of Gems and Jewellery

2587. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state: